

which is 54 only as against 94-99 and 62-72. The length of the wing is, in the same order as above, 80-90, 108-112 and 80-85. Mayr and Rand (1937, p. 114) wrote about its habits: "Besides searching for food on the smaller limbs and even on fallen logs, it very often behaves in a creeper-like fashion, or an almost nuthatch-like manner, climbing up the trunks of saplings and trees, and exploring the branches of the tree tops for food. The moss on the trees is not neglected and the Blue-capped Babbler often digs vigorously into it for its prey. On the horizontal branches, it creeps along the top and sides, rarely venturing onto the underside where it has difficulty in maintaining a hold. To examine the under part of the branch it more often hops along the branch peering down from one side, then from the other, hanging head downward, but not upside down."

It must be noted here that *N. grandis* is also a bird of the low undergrowth and "flies and skulks along close to the ground" (Sálim Ali and Ripley), or is "seen often in low bushes or even on the ground" (Sálim Ali). Robinson and Kloss (1918) note that it is much more terrestrial than most flycatchers. It also nests on or near the ground. Over one hundred nests found by Baker (1933) have been built in holes in dead tree stumps, under fallen logs, among large boulders or among the great roots of some forest tree. In Indochina, it is found above 1,000 metres. "Ifrita" is found in New Guinea from 1,800 up to 3,600 metres, a hint of its northern affinities.

In view of the differences found within the genus *Muscicapa*, *sensu latissimo*, and even in the genus *Niltava* if maintained, I believe that the differences mentioned above do not warrant generic separation of this bird which should be called *Muscicapa (Niltava) kowaldi* and placed near *Muscicapa (Niltava) grandis*.

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## Affinities of *Cataponera*

by MICHEL DESFAYES

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This babbler has no close relative in its native Celebes, a likely reason for its uncertain relationship. Meyer and Wigleworth (1898) say that "it is very like certain blackbirds in appearance, though the shape of its wing as well as the peculiar superciliary stripe of black, at once shows that it has no very real near affinities with *Merula* or *Turdus*". It is evident that the Black-browed Babbler is not a thrush; its thick, rounded rufous tail, bill shape and general proportions are unlike any Turdinae. Its similarity

to *Garrulax* impresses one at once. Hartert (1896, p. 70) erected for it the genus *Cataponera*: "Genus ex affinitate generum *Garrulax*, *Rhinocichla*, *Allocotops* dictorum, sed cauda fere aequalis distiguenda". The last two genera are now merged with the first. "*Rhinocichla* strikes us as being most like *Cataponera*" (Meyer and Wigleworth). The present writer feels that the nearest geographical kin of a species is not necessarily its closest relative. In coloration, *Cataponera* most resembles *Garrulax delesserti* and *G. caerulatus*. The reasons for not following Hartert and dissociating the Black-browed Babbler from the Timaliinae are obscure. I hope that it be included in the genus *Garrulax* and kept in the vicinity of the two last mentioned species. With them, it also shares a tendency of having bare orbital skin.

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## A new form of *Garrulus glandarius* (Linn.)

by ANDREW KEVE

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A black-capped form of Jay, *Garrulus glandarius*, occupies a very restricted area, being found only in the immediate vicinity of Istanbul. The small woods and orchards where it nests are isolated from the larger woods to the north and west by an area of arid country and on the east and south lies the sea.

Through the kindness of Mr. J. D. Macdonald of the British Museum (Natural History) and of Prof. G. Niethammer of the Zoological Institute and Museum A. Koenig, Bonn, I have had six skins of this little-known population for study, and I have been able to compare them with eight from Asia Minor, five from the Caucasus, three from the Crimea, one from the island of Mitylene, one from the island of Chios, three from Lenkoran, one from Iran and eight from Israel.

The Istanbul jay closely resembles birds from the Crimea; it is somewhat paler and therefore different from those of Asia Minor; it is also very variable. In some specimens the cap is divided by broad black longitudinal striations; in others it is uniformly black. The female from "Tash-Cupri" (Pearce locates it "near Constantinople") belongs to the first group and its mantle is somewhat greyish, approaching in this respect *G. g. graecus* Kleiner. A male and an old specimen from Cekmece both have a uniformly black crown, somewhat similar to birds from Asia Minor: the mantles are more reddish-vinous as in *G. g. ferdinandi* Kleiner, the race inhabiting the Istrandja Hills to the north-east. The underparts are slightly whiter as in specimens from the Crimea, Mitylene, Chios and the lightest phases of the Caucasian—Asia Minor population. A moulting specimen is rather more cinnamon-coloured on the mantle. The old specimen from Cekmece has a large white area on the cheek, similar to the lightest phase of the Caucasian birds. The close resemblance to the Crimean population is a good example of convergence. In general the Istanbul population shows the same head characters as all the other